

**Dates of Meeting:**

07 May – 23 May 1951

**Type of Meeting:**

National conference on propaganda work

**Place of meeting:**

Beijing

**Attendance:**

Liu took charge of convening this conference

**Major Agenda Items:**

Initiation of cooperativization in agriculture

**Speeches and Reports:**

**Liu Shaoqi:** Speech, May 7, 1951: a report on the importance of the Party's propaganda work

"What has allowed us to organize the repression against counterrevolutionaries on a large scale? It is the war in Korea! This war has been very beneficial to us and has allowed us to successfully conduct a lot of business (for example, the extension of agrarian reform, the conclusion of the Sino-Soviet Pact, the launching of campaigns to increase production and to repress counterrevolutionaries). The response to this war has been so strong that agrarian reform and the repression of counterrevolutionaries make little noise. This has made it easier for us. Without the commotion surrounding this war, these actions would have been severely criticized. Here and there landowners have been put to death: these actions could have aroused opposition everywhere, which could have prevented us from successfully carrying out our operations." Zhang Ning (2016). *Crimes of Counterrevolution and Politicized Use of the Death Penalty During the Mao Era* in Liang Bin & Lu Hong (Eds.) *The death penalty in China: policy, practice, and reform*. Page 66

He asserts that nationalization of land and collectivization of agriculture must be preceded by supplying the peasants with large quantities of machinery, which in turn could be accomplished only after the nationalization of industry.

"Once the gongs and drums of resisting the United States and assisting Korea begin to make a deafening sound, the gongs and drums of the land reform and suppression of counter-revolutionaries become barely audible, and the latter becomes much easier to implement. Without the loud gongs and drums of resisting the United States and assisting Korea, those of the land reform (and zhenfan) would make unbearable noise. Here a landlord is killed and there another is beaten; there would be fuss everywhere .... Things would then become difficult"

calling on the propaganda front to actively study, research, and disseminate Marxism-Leninism, to use Marxism-Leninism to educate the people, and to raise the class consciousness and ideological level of the entire nation. The report pointed out that propaganda to the masses, education of Party members, and ideological critique are all integral parts of Party work and must be led by Party committees at all levels.

In the past, Party committees at all levels had not provided sufficient leadership for propaganda and educational work, often neglecting it or leaving it to the propaganda departments with little oversight. Tasks were sometimes done perfunctorily or ignored altogether, and mistakes went unchecked, resulting in a disorganized state of propaganda work. While mistakes in other areas may have slower consequences, mistakes in propaganda work can cause immediate problems. Therefore, strengthening Party leadership over propaganda is a decisive issue. This means improving both Party oversight and the capacity of propaganda institutions themselves.

Liu also commented on economic policy, saying that although some were already talking about socialism, it was premature—by at least ten years. Propaganda workers could mention socialism as an ideal, but in practice, it wouldn't be implemented for another decade. Even then, whether socialist steps could be taken would depend on actual conditions. It might be possible after ten years—or it might still be too soon.

On May 7 Liu changed Mao's formulation into "three years for preparation and ten years for the construction" - Mao's words "a planned economy" were omitted. Moreover, Liu stressed that *only after* "ten years for construction" would socialist transition "be considered." See [meeting10-02-1951](#)

**Chen Yun:** Speech, [Developing Rural Industry Is of Primary Importance](#)," May 16:

the key to increasing agricultural production is completing the land reform in the newly liberated areas, avoiding drought, and building railways in the southwest and northwest.

**Liu Shaoqi:** Speech, " [The Party's Tasks on the Propaganda Front](#)," May 23, 1951:

assesses past propaganda work and outlines present and future tasks in propaganda.

He concentrated his attention on expounding on the questions on the study and propagandizing of Marxism. He pointed out: "In order to build socialism and realize communism in our country, it is necessary to lay a sound ideological and theoretical basis and educate all the party members and all the Chinese people. This is a task of our party in the propaganda field in the new situation and new conditions, as well as one of the most basic political tasks for the party."

He "... asserted (...) that it was virtually impossible to guide China's agriculture towards socialism by organizing mutual aid teams or agricultural cooperatives. Liu actually identified the target of his criticism when he declared that "Comrade Lai Ruoyu did not accept the critique of the North China Bureau, therefore he made huge mistakes." Liu sternly advised other comrades to maintain their faith in the party, refrain from embracing localism, and avoid fighting against the center.

**Luo Ruiqing:** report at the first national conference on propaganda work, 19 May 1951,"

Mao's own explanation of his change of mind was revealed in a conversation with Luo Ruiqing, Minister of Public Security. Mao reasoned that the CCP could not suppress counterrevolutionaries on a large scale earlier because conditions were not yet ready, as there were any number of outstanding economic and financial problems and the CCP's relationship with the bourgeoisie was still too fraught. Now that economic and financial problems were basically solved, and the war of resisting the United States and assisting Korea had already begun, "[we] must not miss this opportunity. Probably this is our only operation for suppressing counterrevolutionaries. This will not happen again in the future and therefore is a golden opportunity. Full advantage of this asset must be taken. The purpose is not just to kill several counterrevolutionaries.

More importantly, this [campaign] is for mass mobilization.'

It has been stated that: "the process of reform through labour of criminals ... is essentially an effective method of purging and eliminating all criminals. Labour reform production directly aids in the development of the nation's industries and also saves the nation a great deal of expenses. It is a dependable source of wealth." "Looking at it

from an economic perspective, these counter revolutionary criminals, if not executed right off, are a source of labour, and if we organise them and force them into the service of the nation, ... they will have a definite effect on national development.

**Mao Zedong:**

"Talking about the number of counter-revolutionaries to be killed, a certain proportion must be set. In rural areas, it should not exceed 1/1000 of the population. In killing counter-revolutionaries in the urban areas, generally it should be below 1/1000 of the population, the number .5/1000 seems appropriate. For example, among the 2,000,000 people of Peking, over 600 were killed. Another 300 are planned to be killed. A total number of 1,000 will be enough." Mao further stated: "It is still necessary to kill other big batches and we must do all we can do to kill two thirds of those who are predetermined to be killed by the end of July."

**Deng Yingchao:** pointed out the seriousness of "feudal thinking" that was often reflected in the minds of Party members and officials.

"The primary view is that "women can do nothing." [People with such a view] use every possible means and from every possible aspect to restrict women. Its manifestation in society is discrimination against women, or using all kinds of excuses to refuse or restrict the opportunities for women to participate in employment or education. They would even distort government policies and decrees in order not to give women equal rights"

She emphasized that such educational work should first be conducted among Communist Party officials:

"Only after the feudal remnants among the officials are eradicated, will they then be able to play a better leading role among the people, and will they be able to effectively implement the Party's policies on the women's liberation movement, to bring into play boundless initiatives of the women masses and enable them to participate in all kinds of construction work for the people's motherland"

**Remarks:**

Liu's speech on May 7, 1951, at the CCP National Conference for the Propaganda Work was not published, presumably because it was obviously at odds with the Party's principle.

His published summary report on May 23 at the conference was heavily edited.

But even in the edited version, we can still see that Liu advocated to "encourage the development of the economies of the bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, and [rich] peasant class.